

But Salina only blushed and looked embarrassed and tried to laugh away the matter. All the same from that day forward she set about making the rude and humble home as presentable as possible.

One day Royd came to the place. He found Salina neat and trim of garb, sweet and glad of spirit. The house was neat as a pin. She cooked him a meal that made him long for more. Barren as the land was, she had raised some vegetables and had four cows and sold the milk at a large profit to laborers working along the river, and chickens galore.

"You are a smart, capable woman," declared Royd with sincerity. "It is a shame they sold you this wretched piece of desert land, when there are desirable sites further up the stream."

And then a thoughtful, calculating expression came into the face of Royd. He took a scientific survey of the barren 40 acres. He crossed it to where at its inner edge the ground depressed to the bed of a purdling stream that wound in and out and ten miles farther on joined the Pearl river.

"She's got it!" he cried abruptly, and his eyes sparkled at the suggestion of a mighty idea.

"Mrs. Burgess," he said as he bade her adieu late that afternoon, "you would never have tumbled into this awkward land ownership if I had been by to advise you."

"I know that," sighed Salina, convincingly.

"There is a way out. Will you help me find it?"

Salina fluttered. She half fancied he was going to propose then and there, but he did not. He was a slow-going, methodical man and the time was not ripe for matrimony yet, he wisely decided. "I want you to promise not to sell this land without consulting me."

"That isn't difficult," smiled Salina, "who would buy it?"

"You don't know, others may see

value in its for some specific purpose. Will you make that promise?"

"Why, certainly," agreed Salina.

"And if any one asks you your price, say \$10,000."

"Oh, Bernard!" cried Salina in amazement. Then in consternation she added: "I mean, Mr. Royd; yes, yes, I'll do it, but no danger of any one asking!"

"Wait and see." And with those mysterious words Royd went his way. Salina watched him until he was out of sight.

"Dear, honest soul!" she murmured. "I am afraid I love him."

"A sweet, smart homebody," murmured Royd. "Some day, maybe, I hope."

Three businesslike men announcing themselves as commissioners of the company tramped all over the 40 acres one day a month later. After looking at its environment critically they came to the house.

"You are the owner of this plateau land?" inquired one of the gentlemen courteously.

"Yes, sir," bowed Salina.

"We can use this location in our engineering operation, we find. It is not worth much as a farm. You have your price?"

"Ten thousand dollars," replied Salina sturdily.

The gentleman stared. Then their spokesman smiled.

"I see you have been advised," he observed. "Very well, we will consider the offer."

A few days later Salina received a letter from the office of the development company. The \$10,000 was ready for her. In the course of a week the money was paid. She marveled but held her counsel, returned to Riverton, placed the money in a bank and went to stay with a lady friend until she could decide what to do with all this suddenly acquired wealth. She wondered why Mr. Royd had not come to see her. She knew, one evening.

He made an explanation. The